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SUBJECT: KBR PERSPECTIVE ON HABUR GATE

REF: ADANA 0241

¶1. (SBU-BUS SENS) A senior Kellogg, Brown and Root-Turkey (KBR-T) manager met with PO on Oct. 31 to update the state of current challenges to orderly flow in Turkey along the Iraq ground line of communication (GLOC) as well as transit bottlenecks at the Habur Gate. The KBR-T official noted that the chief problem producing delays at the gate continued to be duplicative, inefficient Turkish border customs/immigration controls as reported in reftel, but that private Turkish trucker diversion of petroleum, oil, lubricant (POL) products was declining due to self-policing by sub-contractors and concerted investigative efforts by KBR-T staff. The largest buildup of trucking assets continued to be at the Iraqi side of the gate as Turkish customs officials scrutinized the empty trucks for possible smuggled items unrelated to KBR-T POL products.

¶2. (SBU-BUS SENS) He related that the Turkish drivers felt increasingly insecure on the outbound trip from Iraq to Turkey, particularly those returning from deliveries to the Central Zone the vicinity of Baghdad. Recently, armed robbers attacked a truck on the return trip and killed the driver. According to the official, this was the first fatality suffered by the Turkish truckers employed by KBR. He noted that US military forces adequately protected the loaded fuel convoys on the inbound trip from Turkey to Iraq.

¶3. (SBU-BUS SENS) The official reiterated in this meeting that the Turkish long-haul POL trucking capacity is near exhaustion making greater efficiency at the gate the central concern. He said that the imminent start of a new KBR-LOGCAP mission will make matters yet more complicated. It will rely on Western and Central European truckers to pass the gate over the next 90-110 days to deliver pre-fabricated housing. Unlike the existing KBR project, these drivers will not have experience with Turkish routes, Customs or language. Nor will they do more than one roundtrip, which might otherwise allow for a learning curve to produce greater transit efficiency. He stated that as winter weather intensifies, the Turkish GLOC will further deteriorate because of inadequate road maintenance. The possibility of a Turkish deployment to Iraq utilizing the Habur Gate would strain the infrastructure even further. The focus on the Habur Gate crossing problems was becoming more crucial he noted, because as winter approached, it would become impossible to start work on or finish a second crossing. Habur Gate, for all its problems, might well be the only option until, at the earliest, next May, he offered.

EDELMAN